

Washington State Legislature Saves Airports

ARLINGTON Legislators agreed on a statewide aviation funding package that is a first step in preserving Washington's critical airport infrastructure. A 2½-cent per gallon increase in the aviation fuel tax will bring 1.3 million dollars to preserve general aviation airports in the state. Washington risks losing several airports due to failing pavement and is the basis for fee increases going directly into airport preservation grants. "It's your investment - watch it work"

Senate Bill 6056 contains several key provisions to lend in the effort of preserving Washington's airport system.

- Aircraft registration fees are set at \$15
- Pilot, airman and airwomen registration fees are set at \$15
- Aircraft fuel tax is set at 10 cents per gallon
- Notification of in change of ownership of a registered aircraft must be completed within 30 days
- Proof of aircraft registration must occur before buying or leasing tie down or hangar space
- Failure to register an aircraft is subject to civil penalties beginning July 1, 2003
- Failure to register as a pilot, airman or airwoman is subject to a civil penalty beginning July 1, 2003

Aviation Biennial Budget

Pilot and aircraft fee increases will generate \$190,000 additional revenue and will be directed to airport maintenance for two years. The aviation fuel tax increase will deposit \$1.3 million into the Aeronautics Account and is also dedicated to airport aid grants. The total budget for the Aviation Division is \$4.9 million with \$2.5 million dedicated to airport aid grants.

Aircraft, Pilots, Mechanics – Are you Registered?

Washington state law requires pilots, aircraft owners and mechanics not associated with aviation manufacturing to register annually with the Washington State Department of Transportation Aviation Division. Over two-thirds of the pilots and half of the Washington's aircraft owners fail to register each year. Many aviators may be unaware of the registration requirement and may be surprised by the new law incorporating civil penalties.

Pilots Call For Stiff Penalties During the 2003 Legislative Session, many pilot organizations testified on the need to improve compliance in the WSDOT Pilot and Aircraft Registration Program. They called for additional enforcement tools be enacted into law so all required aviators register or face stiff penalties.

Register online at www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation

What Happens If...? Information for those frequently asked questions.

- ***What happens on July 1st if I forgot to pay my 2003 aircraft registration due in January?***
Under the new law, if your registration is late by 60 days or more then civil penalties are to be levied.
- ***When is my pilot registration due?***
Your pilot renewal date is on your birthday.
- ***Where does my registration money go?***
Pilot and Airmen registration revenue funds the Aircraft Search and Rescue, Safety and Education Programs. Under the new law, the registration fee increase will go into airport maintenance for two years. Of the \$15 registration fee, \$8 will be deposited in to the Search and Rescue, Safety and Education Account and \$7 will be directed into airport grants.
- ***Who is required to register with WSDOT?***
Under RCW 47.68.020, any person who is a pilot, mechanic or member of a crew in the navigation of an aircraft or any individual who is directly in charge of inspection, maintenance, overhaul, or repair of aircraft engines, propellers, or appliances or aircraft dispatcher is required to register.
- ***Who is exempt from registering with WSDOT?***
Any person employed outside of the United States, or any person employed by a manufacturer or aircraft or performs inspection or mechanical duties associated with manufacturer, or any person inspecting or maintaining their own aircraft are exempt.
- ***If I have a federal certificate, why am I required to register with the WSDOT?***
Washington State law requires any person who operates, causes or authorizes the operation of civil aircraft within the state to hold a certificate, permit or license issued by US Department of Transportation and a current registration issued by WSDOT. Any person who engages in aeronautics as an airmen as defined in RCW 47.68.020 is required to register. Exemptions apply to government operations, pilots registered in a foreign country, interstate (from one state to another) commercial flying, dual instruction flights. Pilots living in Oregon and base aircraft in Washington are required to register with WSDOT.

Key Changes to Pilot and Aircraft Registration Law

Registration Requirement	Prior to July 1, 2003	After July 1, 2003	Registration Due Date	Registration Past Due 60-120 Days	Registration Past Due 120-180 Days	Registration Past Due 180+ Days
Active Washington Pilot	\$8	\$15*	Birthday	\$60 penalty + \$15 registration fee	\$60 penalty + \$15 registration fee	\$60 penalty + \$15 registration fee
Nonresident Pilot regularly operating in Washington State	\$8	\$15*	Birthday	\$60 penalty + \$15 registration fee	\$60 penalty + \$15 registration fee	\$60 penalty + \$15 registration fee
Airmen & Airwomen (mechanic inspector/technician)	\$8	\$15*	March	\$60 penalty + \$15 registration fee	\$60 penalty + \$15 registration fee	\$60 penalty + \$15 registration fee
Aircraft (not including aircraft excise tax)	\$8	\$15	January 1st	\$100 penalty + \$15 registration fee	\$200 penalty + \$15 registration fee	\$400 penalty + \$15 registration fee

***Revenue from the increase (\$7) will be deposited in the Aeronautics Account for airport maintenance for two years while the remaining \$8 will continue to go towards the Aircraft Search and Rescue, Safety and Education Account.**

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“I applaud the commitment and dedication to general aviation demonstrated by the Washington State Legislature in their efforts to save airport,” stated John Sibold, Director for Aviation. “A lot of hard work and collaboration went into preparing the aviation package, including strong participation from general aviation pilots and airports. But we are not done yet. The \$1.5 million increase seems like a lot of money. But in reality, the additional revenue will only provide minimal pavement maintenance relief.”

	Forecast without Tax Increase	Forecast Increase	Forecast Revenue with Tax Increase
	2003-05	2003-05	2003-05
Pilot Registration	\$140,295.00	\$123,384.00	\$263,679.00
Aircraft Registration	\$73,812.00	\$65,245.00	\$139,057.00
Fuel Tax Rate	\$3,255,823.00	\$1,317,332.00	\$4,573,155.00
Total	\$3,469,930.00	\$1,505,961.00	\$4,975,891.00
Airport Aid Grants	\$1,200,000.00	\$1,382,577.00	\$2,582,577.00

The loss of revenue to the aviation system from a lack of registration compliance is over \$150,000 each year. We can no longer sit and watch the aviation system deteriorate. We all need to remember and communicate the importance of the system to the health of the state’s economy. Airport infrastructure is an integral part of our transportation system and we must do what it takes to preserve airports for future generations.”